and experienced in a religiously coded fashion in Indonesia" (p. 223).

Sidel provides an intriguing interpretation of Indonesian violence. Analytically it is interesting to consider whether there are other plausible explanations that are also consistent with these same events. While he rejects both social movement theory and explanations centering on global patterns of post–Cold War ethnic conflict, comparativists have developed many other explanatory frameworks, and it would be interesting to see how he would grapple with them.

While I am quite partial to an identity-based constructivist explanation such as the one Sidel provides, there are several ways in which his case could be further strengthened. One would be greater elaboration of the concepts of uncertainty and anxiety regarding identities and their boundaries. He makes it clear how and when these arose in Indonesia. Yet it would be good to elaborate on the mechanisms underlying their dynamics more generally. What kinds of changes in political or social relations raise (or lower) uncertainty and anxiety around identities, making certain forms of religious or ethnic violence more or less likely? Is this explanation not consistent with Richard Snyder's finding that rapid democratization often leads to violence? How are these emotions converted into political beliefs and mobilization in various cultural settings? When and why does uncertainty and anxiety produce political mobilization in some situations but political withdrawal in others?

Two suggestions about how to address these questions come to mind. One is to spell out more explicitly the kinds of evidence one needs to identify shifts in the levels of collective anxiety and uncertainty concerning identities. Knowing how Sidel decided that there were significant changes in each at various times would be very useful. The second is that Sidel consider more critically whether his wholly Indonesian-based explanation offers explanatory insight into other cases of religious violence. To answer this, we will need a clearer idea of what does and does not constitute evidence for anxiety and uncertainty surrounding identities. To the extent that there are additional situations where the theory seems useful, he will have provided an identity-based explanation for ethnic conflict that incorporates political interests but, at the same time, does not make them do all the heavy lifting that they are assigned in rational choice accounts.

Response to Marc Howard Ross's review of *Riots, Pogroms, Jihad: Religious Violence in Indonesia*

doi:10.1017/S1537592709090240

— John T. Sidel

The argument that religious identities are haunted by anxieties is firmly grounded in anthropology, psychology, and social theory. The evidence for such anxieties in Indonesia comes from close reading of Islamic publications in Indonesia and of ethnographic accounts of localities that *subsequently* experienced episodes of religious violence. There is abundant descriptive evidence of these anxieties in ethnographic accounts and discourse analysis, much more than what readers will find in my book.

The real question, however, is not descriptive but explanatory—how can we link these anxieties to specific episodes and forms of violence? The core puzzle animating my book is the shifting pattern of religious violence: How can we explain shifts in the locations, perpetrators, targets, and forms of violence, in the processes of violent mobilization, and in the "religious" nature of the violence? How can we explain the shift from riots in 1995–97 to pogroms in 1998–2001, to globalized jihad from 2002 through 2005?

I argue that shifts in the structure of religious identities, and the specific anxieties to which they gave rise, constituted *necessary but not sufficient* conditions for the religious violence observed: Fortunately, there is much more anxiety than actual violence. But why did certain shifts (and the specific anxieties they generated) enable certain patterns of violence, but not others? Riots—attacks on department stores, shopping malls, churches, and government buildings—unfolded in the context of specific anxieties accompanying the unprecedented ascendancy of devout Muslims into the urban middle class, the business world, and the political elite, anxieties about the moral costs and compromises of upward social mobility, anxieties disavowed in the riots through the destruction of *property*.

By contrast, pogroms—murderous attacks on individuals and communities—arose amidst uncertainties and anxieties accompanying the shift from centralized authoritarian rule to decentralized democracy and the removal of a fixed, authoritative source of recognition and reinforcement for existing hierarchies of religious authority and boundaries of religious identity in Indonesia. At their most acute, these anxieties—and the violence they inspired—focused on uncomfortably intimate religious "Others," whose forced removal worked to reaffirm religious boundaries and authority structures.

Finally, "global jihad" emerged against the backdrop of dramatic decline, disappointment, demobilization, and disentanglement from state power for forces claiming to speak in the name of Islam. Terrorist attacks on Christian and Western targets in Indonesia—as elsewhere around the world—reflected desperate efforts to rearticulate interreligious antagonisms and reignite religious struggles that had lost their capacity to inspire and animate Muslims.

Contrary to Marc Howard Ross's assertions, my book does situate these specific arguments against the backdrop of broader—and broadly parallel—trends elsewhere in the Muslim world, and within the broader intellectual context of scholarship on religious violence. In my book, my response to the important questions he raises, and in my forthcoming work, I have also tried to suggest how these arguments might be applied—through sociological, ethnographic, and

textual analysis of the very structures of religious identity and authority—to other instances of religious violence around the world today.

Ruling Oneself Out: A Theory of Collective Abdications. By Ivan Ermakoff. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008. 440p. $99.95 cloth, $27.95 paper.
doi:10.1017/S1537592709090252

— Ioannis D. Evrigenis, *Tufts University*

"Why would a group legitimize its own subservience and, in doing so, abdicate its capacity for self-preservation?" is the question asked at the start of *Ruling Oneself Out* (p. xi). Focusing on the Center Party's vote for the enabling act of March 1933, which gave Hitler the right to amend the Weimar constitution, and on the Vichy parliament's vote to grant full powers to Marshal Philippe Pétain in 1940, Ivan Ermakoff studies how these decisions looked to the actors themselves, and finds that the pervasive uncertainty that characterized the situation leading up to each vote, and the actors' tendency to look to their peers for guidance, complicate monocausal accounts of groups marching to their death. Many prevalent attempts to explain these seemingly inexplicable collective actions tend to emphasize coercion, miscalculation, and collusion. Each of these explanations has its merits, and some are more persuasive than others. Yet each has its problems. Coercion, for example, which is the most compelling explanation of the lot, might lead one to expect those threatened to submit, yet fear just as often causes consolidation and vigorous collective resistance to the challenger.

Ermakoff uses a creative mix of sources (archival material, documentary evidence, memoirs) and methods (formal theory, quantitative and hermeneutic analysis), and offers a thought-provoking glimpse into the ways in which the thresholds of individual actors took shape in response to their reference groups and the signals issued by party leaders, and other prominent actors, leading up to their collective alignment. These sources reveal the complexity of the situation on the ground, in 1933 Berlin and 1940 Vichy; the multitude of considerations pulling actors in different directions; and the general uncertainty that accompanied every grave decision. That these decisions were collective and bound by the party and parliamentary setting, rules, and procedures, as well as the sense of accountability to constituents, peers, and the nation at large, made them all the more challenging.

Ermakoff succeeds in conveying the ambivalence and confusion felt by many of these representatives as they were about to make decisions that we know to have had far-reaching consequences. At times such as those, one hopes that others similarly situated could have provided some type of guidance—what to do or what to avoid, and why. When those others are as perplexed as oneself, however, one's attention turns to prominent actors. These actors, who are already the focus of attention under normal circumstances, understandably acquire an added, special significance. Their experience, oversight of the party, and dealings with representatives and members from across the ranks, as well as their interaction with other party leaders, and, most importantly, with the challenger, renders them natural sources of vital information. Their utterances and even silence become the "key to consensus formation and political alignment" (p. xxi).

Placing this much emphasis on the role of prominent actors might give the impression that this is a simple, top-down account of political agency, yet one of the major strengths of Ermakoff's approach is that he reverses this point of view and presents the effects of these prominent actors' stances from the vantage point of those affected by them. From that perspective, Ermakoff challenges the three prevailing alternative explanations of such "collective abdications," and demonstrates successfully that the dynamics on which he focuses ought to supplement any full account of what happened in those cases (e.g., p. 70). Yet as his narrative progresses, one is left with the increasing sense that the deputies' contemporary explanations are thinly veiled attempts to justify what was hard to justify, by engaging in a very common practice: hiding behind others or inside large numbers. Later accounts, whether memoirs or testimonies before honor juries (p. 335), are even more suspect. As post–World War II Germany and France struggled to rehabilitate their political environments, evidence of collaboration with or facilitation of the Nazis and the Vichy government entailed serious reputational and political costs. One would expect interested parties, under such circumstances, to try to shift the blame for their decisions.

At the outset, Ermakoff proposes a distinction between abdication and surrender (p. xi). This distinction is crucial to his argument because it paves the way for a challenge to the strongest counterargument, that centered on coercion. His German protagonists make it clear that the mounting violent acts perpetrated by Nazi thugs were a factor, but not the only factor, in their decision to vote for the enabling act. But what about the effects of the longer-term threat of civil war, of events such as the Reichstag fire, and of the constant presence of uniformed individuals inside and outside the meeting halls? In the case of Vichy, the German occupation complicates the matter even further. If it is true that in 1933 Hitler had power in all but name (p. 75), and that whatever happened in 1940 Vichy was ultimately irrelevant, in what sense can one consider these acts abdications, rather than, effectively, surrenders? As in Hobbes's famous Aristotelian example of the man at stormy sea who can choose to lighten the load of his boat or sink with it, strictly speaking the actors in each case had a choice between voting for and against. But did they really? The Social Democrats resisted and voted against the act, and so one might point to them as an example of the alternative. Yet the reasons that placed them in opposition to Hitler go further